



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA ADMINISTRATOR ANNOUNCES THE ADDITION OF 25 NEW SITES TO THE WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER NETWORK

ATLANTA – Aída Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, today announced the addition of 25 new sites to the SBA's Women's Business Center Program. The program provides training, counseling, and mentoring services to current and potential women entrepreneurs.

"The SBA's Women's Business Center Program is one of the best investments for helping women entrepreneurs succeed," Administrator Alvarez said. "With these 25 new centers, there will be more than 80 centers nationwide -- in 47 states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands. My goal has always been to have a least one center in every state. Today we are closer to achieving that goal."

Administrator Alvarez announced the agency's new women's business centers before the more than 400 women business owners and corporate leaders attending the annual meeting of the National Association of Women Business Owners in Atlanta this week. Alvarez noted that the SBA's Women's Business Center Program is an excellent example of how the public and private sectors can work together to provide women entrepreneurs with the resources they need to get started in business, stay in business and grow.

Nearly \$8 million in funding will be distributed among the 25 new and currently funded sites this year. The centers receive funding over a five-year period, and each site is required to match federal funds with private contributions.

The centers are located in rural, urban and suburban areas, and direct much of their training and counseling assistance toward socially and economically disadvantaged women. They offer many innovative programs, including financial management, marketing and technical assistance, procurement training, mentoring and Internet training. The centers also provide specialized programs that address issues facing displaced workers and rural home-based entrepreneurs. Some locations offer training and mentoring in several languages.

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The Women's Business Center Program was established by Congress in 1988 and is administered by the SBA's Office of Women's Business Ownership. For additional information on the programs available at each new site, refer to the attached list and contact the organizations directly. For more information and a complete listing of the current women's business center locations, visit the SBA's Online Women's Business Center at www.onlinewbc.org/doc/wbcs.

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The U.S. Small Business Administration, established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses. With a portfolio of business loans, loan guarantees and disaster loans worth more than \$45 billion, the SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. Last year, the SBA offered management and technical assistance to more than one million small business owners. The SBA also plays a major role in the government's disaster relief efforts by making low-interest recovery loans to both homeowners and businesses.

America's 24 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, generate more than half of the nation's gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy. For more information, visit our Web site at www.sba.gov.

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